The academic exercise attempts to make a thorough study of Border Town. Structurally, this exercise is divided into six chapters.

The introductory chapter consists of a brief discussion of Shen Congwen's prominent status in China's literary world and the objectives of studying this novel.

Shen Congwen is one of the famous and outstanding writers in contemporary China. He began his career as a professional writer in 1924.

Shen Congwen's writings were much related to his life experiences. When he was young, various wanderings provided him with material that he could express in his works. He was very adept at using descriptive language and showing his world with vivid details. His appetite for books added to his foundation on which he built his own monuments. He experienced a number of wars and revolutions in modern China. He also learnt that the Chinese people became more materialistic and selfish after such events. As for Western industrial influence, Shen believed and hoped that any such influence could not seriously affect the life force of China, so he chose subjects and prose styles that were infinitely more subdued, even delicate. As a survivor of several blood-baths and ideological upheavals, Shen Congwen became a writer who waded through mankind's misery to get to its basic humanity. Since then, he had produced several books of essays and fiction which mainly centred on the life and people of his homeland, Western Hunan (湘甸).

One of Shen Congwen's notable novels, Border Town, was written in 1934. It is representative of Shen Congwen's notions of what constitute an ideal world, unspoiled by modern civilization, for his countrymen. Here, the writer's intention is to present his reader with an impressionistic back-drop to his story: the landscape, the town, the customs, the people -- all are harmoniously rendered in light and shadow.
This academic exercise attempts to make a thorough study of Border Town. Structurally, the exercise is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter consists of a brief discussion of Shen Congwen's prominent status in China's literary world and the objectives of studying this novel.

Chapter Two is an account of Shen Congwen's life and literary activities. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Wong Yoon-Wah (王潤華博士), senior lecturer of the Department of Chinese Studies, for his insightful guidance, suggestions, encouragement, and criticism in writing this novel. It also discusses the materials on which Border Town was based.

Chapter Four deals with the main theme of Border Town through an in-depth analysis of the novel.

Chapter Five concerns the special aesthetic features in Border Town. It is also an assessment of the literary merits and demerits of this novel.

Chapter Six concludes with an overall evaluation of Border Town and the contribution Shen Congwen has made to China's literary world.